

tion to the Bourbons by sacrificing his military honor, and deserting to the Allies, was asked whether Key could have got the soldiers to act against the Emperor. He could only suggest that if Key had taken a musket and himself charged, the men would have followed his example. "Still," said Bourmont, "I would not dare to affirm that he (the marshal) would have won." And who was Key to charge? We know how Kapoleon approached the forces sent to oppose him: he showed himself alone in the front of his own troops. Was Key to deliberately kill his old commander? was any general ever expected to undergo such a test? and can it be believed that the soldiers who carried off the reluctant Oudinot and chased the flying Macdonald, had such a reverence for the "Rougeot," as they called him, that they would have stood by while he committed this murder? The whole idea is absurd: as Key himself said at his trial, they would have "pulverized" him. Undoubtedly the honorable course for Key would have been to have left his corps when he lost control over them; but to urge, as was done afterwards, that he had acted on a preconceived scheme, and that his example had such weight, was only malicious falsehood. The Emperor himself knew well how little he owed to the free will of his Marshal, and he soon had to send him from Paris, as Key, sore at heart, and discontented with himself and with both sides, uttered his mind with his usual freedom. Key was first ordered to inspect the frontier from Dunkirk to Bale, and was then allowed to go to his home. He kept so aloof from Kapoleon that when he appeared on the Champ de Mai the Emperor affected surprise, saying that he thought Key had emigrated. At the last moment Marshal Mortier fell ill. Key had already been sent for. He hurried up, buying Mortier's horses (presumably the ill-fated animals who died under him at Waterloo), and reached the army just in time to be given the command of the left wing.

It has been well remarked that the very qualities which made Key invaluable for defence or for the service of a rearguard weighed against him in such a combat as Quatre Bras. Splendid as a corps leader, he had not the

commander's eye